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DEPARTMENT FOR ISN/CB ANDREW SOUZA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/28/2033

TAGS: ETTC PARM PREL RU IT

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA GROUP: ITALY UNDECIDED ON PLENARY
DISCUSSION OF RUSSIAN AG MEMBERSHIP

REF: STATE 2956

Classified By: Econ Counselor Willian Meara for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) On January 11, Econoff delivered to the Italian MFA reftel points on USG opposition to a proposed informal Australia Group (AG) meeting with Russia to discuss Russian AG membership during the 2008 AG Plenary. Roberto Liotto, the MFA Office-Director level official responsible for AG issues, noted our concerns and agreed that the time is not right for Russian entry into the AG. Liotto made clear that the GOI has not yet finished its internal deliberations and said the GOI will not take a position on this issue until the issue is discussed at the EU level. Liotto predicted that whatever the outcome of the GOI's internal deliberations, it will support the EU position at the AG Plenary.

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